Belief and Faith

a philosophical tract

Josef Pieper

Belief and Faith

Josef Pieper's reputation rests on a remarkable ability to restate traditional wisdom in terms of contemporary problems; he is a philosopher who writes in the language of common sense. In a study leading to the acceptance of the revelation of God as a teacher of man, Dr. Pieper here explores the problem of belief itself, and examines the conditions necessary for it to exist.

Belief is first defined as the regarding of something as true on the testimony of someone else, with emphasis on how strongly such acceptance depends on the appeal made by the witness. Taking his epigraph—"He who wishes to learn must believe"—from Aristotle, Dr. Pieper accompanies examples from the thought of Augustine, Pascal, Newman, and Jaspers with analogies to the structure of belief in the day-to-day human realm, and points out the obstacles that lie between "belief in general" and belief in revelation. The result is a lucid and absorbing inquiry into a continually challenging problem.

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WHAT CATHOLICS BELIEVE

Belief *and* Faith

Belief AND Faith

A Philosophical Tract

BY

JOSEF PIEPER

Translated from the German by
RICHARD *and* CLARA WINSTON

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For

B. F.

He who wishes to learn must believe.

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Belief *and* Faith

Translators' Note

The German word *Glaube* may mean "belief" or "faith." In this translation we have usually rendered it by "belief"; but the reader should bear the other possibility in mind if any phrases strike him as slightly strange. In quotations from Thomas Aquinas *fides* has been translated by "belief" instead of the more customary "faith," for the sake of consistency with the German text.

I

Who really determines what is meant by "belief"? Who is empowered to decide what should be the "true" meaning of this and other root words in the language of men? No one, of course. No individual, at any rate, no matter how great his genius, can possibly determine and fix anything of the sort. It is already determined in advance. And all elucidation must start with this preexistent fact. Presumably Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas, knew precisely what they were doing when they started any discussion by querying linguistic usage:

What do men mean when they say *freedom*, *soul*, *life*, *happiness*, *love*, *belief?* Evidently these ancestors of Western philosophy did not consider such an approach a mere didactic device. Rather, they held the opinion that without such a link to human speech as actually spoken, thinking would necessarily be ethereal, insubstantial, fantastic.

Nevertheless it would be wrong to imagine that determining what is truly meant by the living language of men is an easily mastered task. On the contrary, there is much evidence that it is virtually impossible to exhaust the wealth of meanings in words, especially root words, and to paraphrase them precisely. Perhaps the individual mind is scarcely capable of holding their full richness of meanings in his consciousness. Then again, it seems to be the other side of the coin that an individual ordinarily, when he uses words unself-consciously, usually means *more* than he ever consciously realizes.

It may be that this sounds at first like a romantic exaggeration. But we can show that it is not. Everyone, for example, thinks he knows precisely what so commonplace a word as "resemblance" means. He will say, perhaps, that resemblance is "agreement in several characteristics, in contradistinction to likeness, which is agreement in all characteristics." And what objections

can be raised to so precise a definition, which is, moreover, borrowed from a well-known philosophical dictionary?[1] Nevertheless the definition is wrong, or at least it is incomplete. An essential element of the meaning is lacking. That, to be sure, will be observed only by one who examines the living usage of language. For a part of living usage is not only what men actually say, but what they do *not* explicitly say. Another aspect of living usage is that certain words cannot be employed in certain contexts. Thus Thomas Aquinas once made the point[2] that we can meaningfully speak of a man's resemblance to his father, whereas it is obviously nonsensical and inadmissible to say that a father resembles his son. Herein it becomes apparent that the concept of "resemblance" contains an element of meaning which has been overlooked in the apparently exact definition quoted above ("agreement in several characteristics")—namely, the element of descent and dependence. But who would claim that this initially hidden aspect of the meaning had been present to his consciousness, explicitly and fully, from the very beginning?

We are therefore—let no one be surprised at this—electing a task that may possibly prove extremely difficult when we attempt to discover the full and undiminished meaning of a root word—the meaning, *nota bene*, which

every mature person has in the back of his mind when he uses the word.

Such preliminary considerations are necessary lest we succumb to the lures of excessively precise definitions. For example, we are told that belief simply means "emotional conviction,"[3] or else "practical" certainty about matters which cannot be justified "theoretically." Or it is said that belief is the subjectively adequate but objectively inadequate acceptance of something as true.[4] When we hear such suspiciously exact definitions, we would do well to receive them with a good deal of wariness and distrust.

But then, what do men really mean when they speak of belief? What is the true, rounded, complete signification of this concept? That is the first question we must take up in the following pages.

Someone gives me a news item to read which he himself thinks rather strange. After I have read it, he asks me: "Do you believe that?" What answer does he really want? He wants to hear whether I think that the fact given comports with the potentialities of the real world, what stand I take on it, whether I think it is *true*, whether I consider that it really happened. It is obvious

that there are various possible answers aside from yes or no. I might, for example, say: "I don't know whether it is true; to my mind, it might just as well not be." Or my reply might be: "I imagine that the report is accurate; it seems to me that it is probably right—although as far as I can see, the contrary is not absolutely out of the question." It is also conceivable that I might reply with a firm: "No." This "no" in turn could have several meanings. It might mean that I think the news untrue, a mistake, a lie, a deliberately false trial balloon. On the other hand my "no" might mean the following: "You ask me whether I believe it. No, I do not *believe* it, for I *know* that it is true. I have seen the incident reported here with my own eyes; I happened to be there."

Finally, there is the possibility that I might reply: "Yes, I believe that the report is true, that it happened as described." Perhaps I would be able to say that only after having quickly determined who is the author of the story, or what newspaper printed it.

A first, approximate definition, then, would have to go as follows: To believe is equivalent to taking a position on the truth of a statement and on the actuality of the matter stated. More precisely, belief means that we think a statement true and consider the stated matter real, objectively existent.

The example just cited displays all the "classical" modes of potential attitudes: doubting, supposing, knowing, believing. How are they to be distinguished from one another? One distinction, for example, lies in assent or dissent. Supposing, knowing, believing, are forms of assent. These in turn can be distinguished in terms of the conditionality or unconditionality of the assent. Only the knower and the believer assent unconditionally. Both say: "Yes, it is so and not different." Neither of the two attaches an overt condition to his "yes."

Finally, we could examine the various modes of potential attitudes as to whether and to what extent they assume insight into the subject matter. On that score, we must distinguish between the knower and the believer. Assent on the basis of knowledge does not only presume familiarity with the subject—knowledge *is* that familiarity. Incidentally, refusal to take an unconditional position—the refusal implied in supposition or doubt—can be based precisely on familiarity with the subject. The believer, however, does not know the subject at all, although he regards it as true and real. Precisely this distinguishes the believer. But then we must ask: On what basis can he, like the knower, say without reservation or condition, "Yes, it is so and not different"? How is this possible if, as we have established, he is not famil-

iar with the subject? This is precisely the point at which the difficulty is to be found—both the theoretical difficulty of illuminating the structure of belief as an act, and the difficulty of justifying the act of belief as a meaningful and intellectually responsible act.

By way of preliminary, however, it seems essential for us to assure ourselves that both elements of meaning are actually present: unfamiliarity with the subject matter and yet, at the same time, unconditional conviction of its truth.

First: it is very easy to demonstrate that the believer is, as commonly understood, someone who possesses no exact knowledge of the thing he believes. When has an eyewitness ever begun his account of a happening with the words: "I *believe* it took place as follows . . ."? And no one who has arrived at a given result after careful investigation and after checking his reasoning can logically say: "I *believe* it is so." This negative proposition, at least, seems undeniable. And if we do not trust our own instinct about the use of words, but seek some positive confirmation, we will find it in any standard dictionary. Thus we will find belief defined as follows: "Confidence in the truth of a statement without personal insight into the substance";[5] "to be convinced without having

seen . . . ";[6] "conviction of the truth of a given proposition . . . resting upon grounds insufficient to constitute positive knowledge."[7]

The great theologians, too, attest to the same thing. *Creduntur absentia*, Augustine says.[8] That means that the formal subject of belief is what is not apparent to the eye, what is not obvious of its own accord, what is not attainable either by direct perception or logical inference. Thomas Aquinas formulates the same idea as follows: "Belief *cannot* refer to something that one sees . . . ; and what can be proved likewise does not pertain to belief."[9]

Naturally, this cannot mean that in the act of belief the believer simply takes leave of his own perceptions. A word must be said at this point to avert possible misunderstanding. Naturally it would not make sense to talk about "belief" if the subject for belief could be proved. Nevertheless the believer must (for example) know enough about the matter to understand "what it is all about." An altogether incomprehensible communication is no communication at all.[10] There is no way either to believe or not-believe it or its author. For belief to be possible at all, it is assumed that the communication has in some way been understood.

In asserting this we are saying something whose full

import will only be revealed in the specific area of *religious* belief. For what we are asserting is as follows: Even the revelatory pronouncements of God must, in order for men *to be able* to believe them, be "human" at least to the extent that the believer can grasp out of his own knowledge what they are about. Of course human reason will never be able to fathom the event which is concealed behind theology's technical term "incarnation." Yet this event could never become subject to human belief if it remained utterly incomprehensible to men, if men had no means whatsoever of grasping what is meant by "incarnation." To put this in more "philosophical" terms: if God is conceived exclusively as "absolute Otherness," and if all direct analogies between the divine and human spheres are barred, then it is impossible to expect of men believing acceptance of any divine pronouncement; it is impossible to make "belief in revelation" comprehensible to men as a meaningful act. The great teachers of Western Christendom have expressed this idea many times. Thus St. Augustine says that there is no belief without preceding knowledge, and that no one can believe in God if he understands nothing.[11] And Thomas Aquinas states: "Man could not believingly assent to any proposition if he did not in some way understand it."[12]

But this remark is anticipation of our argument. What

we are at present discussing is not the theological concept of belief, but belief in general, taken in its most comprehensive but nevertheless strict and proper meaning. And an essential element of this meaning is the fact that the believer cannot know and verify out of his own knowledge the matter to which he assents.

There is a second vital element in the concept of belief: that the assent of belief is, as it were by nature, unqualified and without reservation. Now this statement seems far less easy to substantiate. Living usage, it might be objected, rather suggests the reverse: that to say, "I believe it is so," implies a reservation. When we say that, we are clearly not making a simple asseveration; rather we are implying that we are not wholly sure; we suppose, we think probable, we assume, we consider—and so on. (In fact—this by way of a digressive comment—everyday language recognizes a meaning of "believe" which is equivalent to "pretend". To "make believe" is to pretend that what is not true is true. And colloquially the meaning can be stretched even farther. "You cannot make me believe that" need not mean "You cannot convince me," but "You cannot fool me.") Linguistic usage, it would seem, contradicts the thesis that "belief" implies unqualified acceptance of something as true.

On this score, the following may be said. Every

historical language which is the product of natural growth is characterized by something which does not occur in an artificial terminology: namely, *improper* use of words. "Improper" here means neither "vague" nor "meaningless" nor "arbitrary." Rather, it means to use words not in the strict and full sense which "properly" belongs to them. Impropriety in usage of a word can be recognized by one unmistakable sign: a word used in its improper sense can be exchanged for another without altering the meaning of the sentence. Thus, for example, in such cases the word "believe" can be replaced by "think," "assume," "consider probable," "suppose."[13] Contrariwise, we know a word is being used in its "proper" sense when any such substitution is impossible. We therefore must ask: In what context can the word "believe" *not* be replaced by any other?

Let us assume that I receive a visit from a stranger who says that he has just returned home from many years as a prisoner of war, and tells me that he has seen my brother in prison camp; that this brother, missing for so long and believed dead, will probably soon be repatriated. Let us say that much of what he tells me fits into my own picture of my brother; thus there is the confirmation of internal probability. But I have no way at all of checking upon the decisive factor—whether my

brother is still alive and what his state is. To a certain extent I can check on the credibility of the witness, and naturally I would do everything in my power to find out as much as possible about him. But sooner or later I shall inevitably be confronted with the decision: Am I to believe or not to believe the man's story; am I to believe *him* or not? In these interrogative sentences it is quite clear that the word "believe" cannot be replaced by any other word. And that tells us that here "believe" is being used in its full, strict, proper sense.

Two things come to light immediately as corollaries of this argument. The believer, in the proper sense of the word, has—*first*—to do not only with a given matter, like the knower, but also with a given person: with the witness who affirms the matter, and on whom the believer relies. *Secondly* (and this is the question we have been examining), belief in the proper sense really means *unqualified* assent and *unconditional* acceptance of the truth of something. Suppose that as the result of my pondering the matter I should say to the returned prisoner, now sitting at my table as my guest, that his account has greatly impressed me and that I am inclined to think it accurate, but since I do not have any means of checking . . . If I were to say anything of the kind, I should have to be prepared for him to break in and say

bluntly: "In other words, you don't believe me!" In order to soften the affront I might reply: "Oh yes, I have full confidence in you and I'm quite prepared to believe you, but of course I cannot be completely certain." If my visitor should insist that I do *not* really believe him—he would be entirely right. To say, "I believe you but I am not quite certain," is either to use the word "believe" in the improper sense, or to be talking nonsense.

When the word "belief" is used in its proper sense, when no substitute for it is possible, then it signifies (in everyone's opinion, be it noted) an unrestricted, unreserved, unconditional assent. In respect to knowledge of the subject, the eyewitness and the knower are superior to the believer, but not in respect to undeterred firmness of assent.[14] "It is part of the concept of belief itself that man is certain of that in which he believes."[15] John Henry Newman, who, as is well known, was deeply interested all through his life in the structure of the act of belief, expressed the same thought in an almost challenging manner: "A person who says, 'I believe just at this moment . . . but I cannot answer for myself that I shall believe tomorrow,' does not believe."[16]

The question then arises all the more pointedly: How is it meaningfully possible for someone to say uncon-

ditionally: "It is thus and not different"? How can this be justified when the believer admittedly does not know the subject to which he thus assents—does not know it either directly, by his own perceptions, or indirectly, on the basis of conclusive arguments?

II

To BELIEVE always means: to believe someone and to believe something. *Ad fidem pertinet aliquid et alicui credere.*[1] The believer—in the strict sense of the word—accepts a given matter as real and true on the testimony of someone else. That is, in essence, the concept of belief.

Strangely enough, in theological disputation the two elements of belief which we here present as linked—assent to the truth of a subject and assent to a person—have repeatedly been isolated and played off against one another, as though they were by nature incompatible.

Martin Buber, for example, states that there are "two modes of belief,"[2] the "Greco"-Christian mode and the Jewish mode. The first, he says, depends exclusively upon holding propositions to be true, whereas the second affirms a relationship of trust to God as a Person. It is not for me to define the nature of belief as it is conceived in religious Judaism. But the Christian concept of belief, at any rate, explicitly embraces both the material and the personal element. "Everyone who believes assents to the testimony of someone."[3] "Belief is always addressed to a person."[4] The first of these two sentences is by Thomas Aquinas; the second by Martin Luther—evidence that on this score no difference of opinion existed between the Reformer and the last great teacher of a still undivided Western Christendom.

These twin elements, to believe *something* and to believe *someone*, are not to be taken as a structureless parallel, a mere co-ordinate existence of the two elements side by side. It may very well happen that one person can accept as true something another says without necessarily believing the other. For to believe means: to regard something as true and real on the testimony of someone else. Therefore, the reason for believing "something" is that one believes "someone." Where this is not the case, something other than proper belief is involved.

A judge listening to the interrogation of members of a gang charged with some crime may very well be convinced that certain items in their statements are true; but the reason he thinks them true is not that he trusts the witnesses, that he assents to the witnesses as persons. His belief may be due to other causes—such as, let us say, a congruity between various independent statements. We might speak here of an assumption of probability, or perhaps even of a kind of knowledge. Such knowledge has been called *scientia testimonialis*, knowledge on the basis of the testimony of witnesses. But the phrase "on the basis of" may give rise to confusion. Strictly speaking, it is not the statement itself but the congruence of various testimonies which provides the basis for certainty. Thus this certainty has nothing to do with belief.

It presumably happens fairly often that something which in reality is not belief is nevertheless regarded as belief—possibly even by the "believers" themselves. Thus someone may accept the doctrines of Christianity as truth *not* because they are witnessed and warranted by the revealing Logos of God, but because he is impressed by their "coherence," because the boldness and depth of the conception fascinates him, because those doctrines fit in with his own speculations on the mystery

of the universe. This man would then regard the content of Christian religious doctrines as true, but *alio modo quam per fidem*, "in a different way from that of belief."[5] He might without any qualms consider himself a "believing Christian"; and others might likewise so regard him. Possibly the error would only come to light in a crisis; then it would become apparent that what was "collapsing" might have been various things: a kind of "philosophy of life," or "ideological" wishful thinking, or respect for tradition—but not at all belief in the strict sense.

If now we were to ask one who truly believes: "What do you really believe?" he would not need to name individual items of his creed; but if he wished to be perfectly precise, he would have to point to his authority and reply: "I believe what that person has said." In replying thus he would have named the essential common feature of all the individual items of his creed. He would be stating the reason for his accepting them as true. For that reason is merely the fact that someone said so. "In all belief, the decisive factor [*principale*] is who it is whose statement is assented to; by comparison the subject matter which is assented to is in a certain sense secondary." Thus Thomas Aquinas in his Tract on Belief.[6]

If we pursue this consistently, it follows that belief itself is not yet "purely" achieved when someone accepts as truth the statement of one whom he trusts, but only when he accepts it *for the simple reason* that the trusted person states it.[7] That, of course, is an extreme position, which seems almost to verge upon unreality. What normally happens among human beings is that one person trusts and believes another, but that he does not accept the other's statements *exclusively* on his word; rather, an element in his acceptance is their inner probability, their concordance with what he already knows, and so on. Nevertheless, at this juncture I wish to carry precise definition of the formal concept of belief to the extreme. For only at that extreme does another and hitherto hidden element come to light. For if that extreme case does occur (that someone should accept something unreservedly as true without any other supporting evidence, for the sole reason that someone else says so), then this wholehearted believer must logically accept as true *everything else* that his authority has said or will ever say in the future. We need only consider this proposition for a moment and it becomes clear beyond the possibility of doubt that in human relationships belief of this sort cannot exist. Belief of such an extreme sort, such as is involved in the expression "believe *in* someone," can neither be practiced by mature human beings,

nor be asked of them. (The immature child believes what its mother says for the sole reason that she says it. But the very fact that the child has no other reason for regarding things as true is, precisely, the measure of his immaturity.)

Here living language offers corroboration which has a certain topical significance. Let us assume that someone says, in all seriousness, that he believes "in" another person, and let us assume also that by this phraseology he means all that the words really signify (namely, that he is ready to accept as true and valid whatever this other person says and will say, even if such acceptance involves radical changes in his own life). It seems to me that if we make that assumption, the language itself—perhaps somewhat indistinctly, but nevertheless audibly enough—will impress upon us the fact that certain limits have been overstepped. The volume of the Grimms' *German Dictionary* containing the article on *Glaube* (belief) was first published in 1936. It oversteps the limits in the following definition:[8] "In the eighteenth century 'belief' was transferred from the sphere of the supernatural and religious with a special meaning to the area of the natural and this-worldly, and in the later usage usually signifies a strong emotional relationship to secular values, ideals, personalities, etc., which appear to

be akin, in inner force and ethical content, to religious 'belief.' " As evidence for this statement, the following linguistic examples are listed: "belief in oneself," "belief in humanity," "belief in Germany," "belief in the Fuehrer." It seems to me that the sinister slogan which caps this series has here been placed in a manner as accurate as it is memorable within its "genealogical" context.

To repeat: wherever, in the relationships of men to men, "belief" in the strict sense is demanded or practiced, something essentially inhuman is taking place, something that is contrary to the nature of the human mind, something that is equally incompatible with its limitations and its dignity. The ancients expressed the same idea in their more temperate manner: "The cognition of one man is not by nature so correlated with the cognition of another man that the former may be governed by the latter."[9] That is to say: no mature man is by nature so spiritually inferior or superior to another that the one can serve the other as an absolutely valid authority.

It is fairly clear that this idea has a further drift. It tends to delimit the conditions in which belief in the full and strict sense can be meaningfully possible. One essential condition is this: that Someone exists Who

stands incomparably higher above the mature man than the latter stands above the immature man, and that this Someone has spoken in a manner audible to the mature man.

Only on this assumption is it proper for a man simply to believe. Only then is it permissible; only then can belief be demanded of him. To be sure, if that is so, then belief is both demanded and necessary. If that condition is met, then belief is above all "natural" to man: that is to say, it is consonant with both his limitations and his dignity.

III

MAN can be compelled to do a good many things. There are a good many other things he can do in a halfhearted fashion, as it were against his will. But belief can never be halfhearted. One can believe only if one wishes to. Perhaps the credibility of a given person will be revealed to me so persuasively that I cannot help but think: It is wrong not to believe him; I "must" believe him. But this last step can be taken only in complete freedom, and that means that it can also not be taken. There may be plenty of compelling arguments for a

man's credibility; but no argument can force us to believe him.[1]

The unanimity of statements on this point is astonishing; and the agreement ranges all the way from Augustine and Thomas to Kierkegaard, Newman, and André Gide. Augustine's phrase from the Commentary on John is famous: *Nemo credit nisi volens;* "No one believes except of his own free will."[2] Kierkegaard says that one man can do much for another, "but give him belief, he cannot."[3] Newman is forever stressing, in one guise or another, the one idea that belief is something other than the result of a logical process; it is precisely *not* "a conclusion from premises." "For directly you have a conviction that you ought to believe, reason has done its part, and what is wanted for faith is, not proof, but *will*."[4] And André Gide? In the last jottings which he published after his *Journals* we may read these sentences: "There is more light in Christ's words than in any other human word. This is not enough, it seems, to be a Christian: in addition, one must *believe*. Well, I do not believe."[5] Taken all together, these statements obviously mean the following: It is one thing to regard what someone else has said as interesting, clever, important, magnificent, the product of genius, or absolutely "true." We may feel compelled to think and say any

and all these things in utter sincerity. But it is quite a different matter to accept precisely the same statements in the way of *belief*. In order for this other matter, belief, to come about, a further step is necessary. A free assent of will must be performed. Belief rests upon volition.[6]

Indeed this cannot be otherwise. When the knower says, "It is so and not otherwise," he may speak thus because the subject matter has been shown to him personally; the truth compels him to admit it. "Truth," after all, means nothing but the showing of what is. Precisely this self-demonstration of what is does *not* happen to the believer. It is not the truth, then, that compels him to accept the subject matter. Rather, he is motivated by the insight that it is good to regard the subject matter as true and real on the strength of someone else's testimony. But it is the will, not cognition, which acknowledges the good.[7] Thus, wherever belief in the strict sense is involved, the will is operative in a special fashion, the will of the believer himself. The will even takes precedence in the cognition of faith; it is the most vital element.[8] We believe not because we see, perceive, deduce something true, but because we desire something good.

It is scarcely possible to make such a statement without at once being troubled by the thousand misunderstandings to which it gives rise—which in fact it encourages and provokes. I shall therefore plunge right in and discuss the commonest of these misunderstandings.

If the believer is really led to believe "not by the reason but by the will,"[9] then *what* is it which is actually willed; what does this volition aim at; what is its object? To this question the answer has been given: what is willed is the act of belief itself; the believer believes because he *wants* to believe. But this answer still throws no light upon the role played by the will as it is formulated in the Western doctrine of belief. From the psychological point of view such a "will to believe" can of course exist. And pragmatism is by no means wrong when it asserts that believing is one of the needs of human nature. But it is nonsense to think that belief can be justified by the fact that it satisfies this need.[10] On the contrary, to take this view is to renounce the possibility of such justification; it is acceding entirely to the charge that belief is a wholly irrational matter, a form of intellectual untidiness which cannot pass muster, or meet the test of the mind's obligation to face the truth.

We must also give short shrift to the notion that the will's precedence in the act of belief means that the be-

liever is arranging his beliefs to conform with his deeper wishes. Thus, does one say, "I believe in Eternal Life," because one wishes for an Eternal Life? The doctrine of the precedence of the will cannot possibly mean that; we need waste no further words on such a conception. Nevertheless, there remains that old statement that the believer's mind is directed toward that which he hopes for and loves.[11] In the act of belief, therefore, the will may very well be engaged with the subject of belief. Before the human act of belief is possible, we must presuppose that the believer experiences the subject to be believed as something that really concerns him, as an object of hope, longing, and love, and in that sense as a goal of volition. Nevertheless, it is not this kind of volition which is intended when it is said that the assent of belief is motivated by the will.

The question, therefore, still remains open: What is the aim of that volition which marks belief—if that volition is bound up with neither the act nor the content of belief? The answer is: The will of the believer is directed toward the person of the witness, toward the warrantor.

At this point, it is true, we find ourselves obliged to make a slight correction in our ordinary, narrowly activistic conception of volition. To will does not only mean "to decide . . . for actions . . . on the basis of mo-

tives."[12] Volition is not merely the will to *act;* it is not directed solely toward something which is to be "brought about" and which consequently is not yet real. Rather, so say the ancients, volition has also the property of "wanting," affirming, loving, what already exists. Love is participation in and consummation of the beloved's being, as it is. It is, incidentally, not quite precise to say that in the traditional conception of volition love is one attribute among others; rather, love is conceived as the primal act of the will, as the fundamental principle of all volition and the immanent source of every manifestation of the will.[13]

Once more, then: Toward what does the believer direct his will when he believes? Answer: Toward the warrantor and witness whom he affirms, loves, "wills" —insofar as he accepts the truthfulness of what that witness says, accepts it on his mere word. This wholly free, entirely uncoercible act of affirmation, which is enforced neither by the power of self-evident truth nor by the weight of argumentation; this confiding, acknowledging, communion-seeking submission of the believer to the witness whom he believes—this, precisely, is the "element of volition" in belief itself.

The great German theologian Matthias Joseph Scheeben[14] has expressed this association in a long sentence

which may strike one as somewhat schoolmasterly and old-fashioned, but which is nevertheless a vital and extremely precise description: "Assent of the intellect to the witnessed truth takes place only to the extent that the will . . . seeks and wishes to bring about consent or agreement with the judgment of the speaker, participation in and communion with his insight, or in other words a spiritual union with him; the will seeks this union as a good and thus motivates the intellect to accept the insight of the witness as if it were its own—'so that the believer[15] stands in exactly the same relationship to that which the other knows, and which he does not know, as it does to that which he knows himself.' "

That is to say, the "good" toward which the will of the believer is directed is communion with the eyewitness or knower who says "it is so"; this communion comes to life and reality in that the believer, repeating this "it is so," accepts what the other says as truth—and accepts it *because* he says it. This idea has been summed up most cogently by John Henry Newman in his Oxford University addresses: "We believe because we love."[16]

Communion, spiritual union, love—these are, to be sure, grand words. And one might well ask with some misgiving whether they are not too grand, when after

all what is involved is something so commonplace as men's trusting one another in ordinary human intercourse. Nevertheless it becomes apparent that even so grand a word as "love" is not malapropos in talking of man's relationship to his fellow men. Perhaps this becomes completely clear to us only when we consider the subject against the dark background of a contrasting reality. This does not call for any difficult intellectual operation; contrasting reality is by no means foreign to our experience. I refer of course to the life of our fellow men under the conditions of tyranny. As we all know, under such conditions no one dares to trust anyone else. Candid communication dries up; and there arises that special kind of unhealthy wordlessness which is not silence so much as muteness. This is what happens to human intercourse under the peculiar pressures of dictatorship. Under conditions of freedom, however, human beings speak uninhibitedly to one another. How illuminating this contrast is! For in the face of it, we suddenly become aware of the degree of human closeness, mutual affirmation, communion, which resides in the simple fact that people listen to each other and are disposed from the start to trust and "believe" each other. We do not wish to rhapsodize about this, and grand words should always be used with caution. Still, we do well to

recognize that everyone who speaks to another without falseness, even if what he says is not at all "confidential," is actually extending a hand and offering communion; and he who listens to him in good faith is accepting the offer and taking that hand. This very advertence of the will, which, admittedly, we cannot quite call "love," though it partakes somewhat of love's nature—this sense of mutual trust and free interchange of thoughts produces a unique type of community. In such a community he who is hearing participates in the knowledge of the knower.

It is an axiom of theology that belief puts man into contact with the knowledge of God Himself.[17] Something of the same sort is vouchsafed everyone who believes a credible witness: he is placed in a condition of seeing something which would never be attainable by his own unaided sight, of seeing with the eyes of him who sees directly. This miracle, however, is the fruit of that loving advertence. Not only is belief based upon the turning of the will toward the witness; it is that very turning of the will which makes belief.

IV

To BELIEVE means: to participate in the knowledge of a knower. If, therefore, there is no one who sees and knows, then, properly speaking, there can be no one who believes. A fact which everyone knows because it is obvious can no more be the subject of belief than a fact which no one knows—and whose existence, therefore, no one can vouch for.[1] Belief cannot establish its own legitimacy; it can only derive legitimacy from someone who knows the subject matter of his own accord. By virtue of contact with this someone, belief is transmitted to the believer.[2]

There are several statements implicit in this proposition. To begin with: Belief is by its nature something *secondary*. Wherever belief is meaningfully held, there is someone else who supports the believer; and this someone else cannot be a believer. Before belief, therefore, come seeing and knowing. These take precedence over belief. Any serious examination of human modes of thinking and speaking will bear this out. The same obtains for the concept of belief in Occidental theology. Neither the theological nor the epistemological approach will permit us to elevate belief into something supreme and sublime which cannot be surpassed. Thus, Newman states rather sternly: "Faith, then, must necessarily be resolvable at last into Sight and Reason; unless, indeed, we agree with enthusiasts."[3]

Therefore, when we rank belief as secondary to seeing and knowing, we are not going counter to the traditional doctrine of belief. Rather, we are completely in accord with that doctrine. *Visio est certior auditu*, says Thomas;[4] seeing is surer than hearing. That is to say, in seeing for ourselves we are achieving more contact with reality and are in greater possession of reality than when we espouse knowledge based upon hearing.

This statement, to be sure, promptly calls for an important addition or, we might also say, a correction. The

aphorism quoted from the *Summa theologica* was quoted only partially. The entire statement is as follows: *Ceteris paribus visio est certior auditu;* that is, *under otherwise similar conditions* seeing is surer than hearing. That is to say: if both possibilities are equally available to us, if we have the choice—then we choose knowledge based on seeing, and not knowledge based on hearing.

But perhaps man's situation is that he cannot choose, or at any rate, not always. What is he to do when decision lies between *either* no access whatsoever to a given subject matter *or* knowledge on the basis of hearing; *either* incomplete knowing *or* no knowing at all? The fact remains, as we have said, that *ceteris paribus* seeing for oneself is surer than hearing. But what if seeing for oneself is impossible? Should we then, instead of accepting a less than complete access to reality as the best we can hope for, rather forgo all access, following the heroic maxim: "All or nothing"? That precisely is the question each man confronts when he has to decide between belief and non-belief.

Let us take the case of a naturalist who around the year 1700 has set himself the task of describing the pollen grains of the flowers he knows. No doubt he would be able, with the naked eye and the aid of simple

magnifying glasses, to find out a good deal by "seeing for himself." But suppose he is visited by a colleague who has seen such pollen at Delft under one of the first microscopes made by Anton van Leeuwenhoek. Suppose this visitor tells him that the black dust which adheres to one's hand when one brushes a poppy is in fact a mass of geometric structures of extremely regular shapes which can be clearly differentiated from the pollen granules of all other flowering plants—and so on. Let us assume further that our naturalist has had no opportunity to look through a microscope himself, and has never observed these things which his visitor reports. Granted these assumptions, would not our naturalist be grasping more truth, which means more reality, if he did *not* insist on regarding as true and real only what he has seen with his own eyes, if on the contrary he could bring himself to "believe" his visitor? In such a situation, what about the ranking of knowledge based upon seeing for oneself and knowledge based upon hearing? Does not hearing and believing take precedence?

Here is the point for us to present in its entirety the sentence of Thomas which we have hitherto abbreviated: "Under otherwise similar conditions seeing is surer than hearing; but if the one from whom we learn something by hearing is capable of grasping far more

than one could obtain by seeing for oneself, than hearing is surer than seeing."[5] Naturally this sentence was originally formulated in regard to belief in the theological sense. But it is equally true of all kinds of belief; belief has the extraordinary property of endowing the believer with knowledge which would not be available to him by the exercise of his own powers.

A dictum from Hesiod's *Works and Days*[6] makes the very same point. As Hesiod puts it, being wise with the head of someone else is undoubtedly a smaller thing than possessing knowledge oneself, but it is far to be preferred to the sterile arrogance of one who does not achieve the independence of the knower and simultaneously despises the dependence of the believer.

Before we, as believers, accept the testimony of another, we must be sure that he has authentic knowledge of those things which we accept on faith. If he himself is, in his turn, only a believer, then we are misplacing our reliance. It becomes clear, therefore, that this reliance itself, which is the decisive factor in the act of belief, must be founded upon some knowledge on the part of the believer if it is to be valid. This is still another aspect of the proposition that belief rests upon knowledge.

To be sure, trusting reliance is by nature a free act. No argumentation, no matter how "compelling," can actually bring us to "believe" in someone else. Nevertheless this act does not take place in a vacuum and without reason—without, for example, some conviction of the credibility of the witness on whom we rely. But this conviction in turn cannot possibly be belief; the credibility of the witness whom we believe cannot also be the subject of belief; this is where real knowledge is required. The matter is, to be sure, somewhat complicated.

Let us return to our example of the returned prisoner of war. We can single out fairly clearly the element which requires belief. It is the information that my brother is alive. Let us say I have assured myself of the reliability and credibility of the witness by checking up, by sharp observation and direct experience. On the other hand, the credibility of the man might be underwritten for me by someone else, by one of my friends, say, who I discover knows my informant very well. In such a situation it would once again be an act of belief which assured me of my visitor's credibility. Nevertheless, it is clear that the conviction, "My brother is alive," not only has a different content and has come about in a different way from the conviction, "My informant is

trustworthy," but also that these two acts of belief are based upon two altogether different testimonies from two different witnesses. In short, we see that the premises of belief cannot be the object of that same belief.

The real implications of this thesis dramatically come to light in the theological realm. We might imagine the following dialogue: "On the basis of what, really, are you convinced that there is an Eternal Life?"—"On the basis of divine Revelation; He Who is the absolute Knower and the absolute Truth has said so, and I *believe* Him."—"On the basis of what are you so sure that anything like God exists and that He is absolutely knowing and truthful?" We obviously cannot simply respond: "I believe it." To put the matter more cautiously, there must at least be a possibility of responding: "I know it."

But the following question might also be asked in that dialogue: "On the basis of what are you certain that God has spoken at all and that He has actually said there is Eternal Life?"

Here, again, we could not legitimately respond with a simple profession of belief.

If man is prohibited from obtaining by his natural powers some kind of knowledge that God exists, that He is Truth itself, that He actually has spoken to us, and that this divine speech has said and meant thus and so

—then belief in revelation is likewise not possible as a meaningful human act (By a *human* act theology also understands the act of "supernatural," "infused" faith, for we ourselves are the ones who do the believing!). To put this as sharply as possible: if *everything* is said to be belief, then belief has been eliminated.

This very thing underlies the old idea of the *praeambula fidei;* the premises of belief are not a part of what the believer believes.[7] They pertain rather to that which he knows, or at least must be able to know. It is another matter that in the ordinary course of events, only a few really know what is in itself knowable. In any case this does not detract from the validity of the proposition: *cognitio fidei praesupponit cognitionem naturalem.*[8] Belief does not presuppose knowledge based upon belief in its turn dependent upon someone else, but rather knowledge out of one's own resources.

Nowhere, to be sure, will we find it written that this *cognitio naturalis* must always or primarily be derived by means of rational deduction. "Credibility," for example, is a quality of persons, and can only be known in the same manner as we apprehend the other personal qualities of a person. In this realm, of course, syllogistic argumentation plays only the most minor part. When

we direct our gaze upon a human being, we engage in a rapid, penetrating, and direct cognition of a unique kind. Certainly we bring nothing of the sort to our examination of facts of nature, however earnest and searching this may be. On the other hand, such "intuitive" knowledge may be neither verifiable nor provable. Socrates declared that he could recognize a lover at once. *By what signs* do we recognize things of that sort? No one, not even Socrates, has ever been able to answer this question in a way that can be checked and demonstrated. Yet Socrates would stoutly insist that this knowledge was no mere impression, but objective, true knowledge, that is to say, knowledge which had risen out of contact with reality.

Of course we do not intend in the least to deny the necessity and the importance of rationally demonstrative argumentation (for the existence of God, say, or for the historical authenticity of the Bible), especially in the realm of religious truth. But it is equally evident to me that we might say: Whoever undertakes to defend belief against the arguments of rationalism should prepare himself by considering the question: "How do we apprehend a person?"[9]

V

No one who believes *must* believe; belief is by its nature a free act. However convinced we are of the credibility of a witness, it is not enough to compel us to believe; and however incontrovertible the content of a truth may appear to the knower, it is *not* so to the believer. The believer therefore, in that he believes, is always free. Because this is so, moreover, belief is a particularly opaque phenomenon. Not only religious belief in revelation, but also the credence which men pay to one another, is by nature adjacent to and akin to mystery, because it springs from freedom.

The believer, therefore, has an alternative choice: he might choose to non-believe. But since his "certainty" presupposes that he has already settled on a single possibility, it is plain that the *certainty of the believer* must possess a special quality.

There are quite a few definitions of "certainty." The whole lot of them, it seems to me, may be reduced to two basic modes. The first conceives of certainty as a "firm assent, that is, assent excluding all doubt and regarded as ultimate."[1] It is immediately apparent that part of the nature of belief, not only of religious faith, is to be entirely certain in that sense. The concept itself excludes the possibility that belief and uncertainty can coexist side by side.

The second, equally common definition holds that certainty is a "firm assent founded on the evidentness of the matter."[2] Here the "evidentness" of the matter means nothing more nor less than its obviousness, which for the person involved springs from a clear cognition of this same matter. According to this definition, no believer, of course, can possess certainty—for belief means: to accept as true and real a matter which is *not* in itself obvious.

This curious coexistence of certainty and uncertainty, which not only describes but actually constitutes the

psychological situation of the believer, must be considered more closely. Thomas Aquinas has coined a terse formulation for the duality of the matter:[3] in belief, he says, there is *aliquid perfectionis et aliquid imperfectionis*, an element of perfection and an element of imperfection. The perfection inheres in the firmness of the assent, the imperfection in the fact that no vision operates—with the result that the believer is troubled by a lingering "mental unrest."[4]

The Latin word which we here translate as "mental unrest" is *cogitatio*. It is worth while to consider for a moment the meaning of this word, which we may think we are quite familiar with. So central is this term to the whole issue that tradition has included it in the briefest formula for the concept of "belief" which we have; to wit: *cum assensione cogitare*.[5] If we wished to translate this into English as: to "think" with assent, the phrase would be not only far too vague and colorless, but would obviously fail to embrace the meaning of this precise formulation. Thomas himself explicitly intends it as a definitive characterization of the structure of the act of belief.[6] It is therefore vital to see just what is meant here by *cogitare* and *cogitatio*. What is meant is searching investigation, probing consideration, conferring with oneself before deciding, being on the track of,

a mental reaching out for something not yet finally found.[7] All of these processes, taken together, may be subsumed within the term "mental unrest."

It is therefore the linking of final assent with a residual *cogitatio*, that is, the association of rest and unrest, which distinctively characterizes the believer.

There is a single act which is quite free of this mental unrest. That is assent on the basis of immediate insight. If the matter is present to the sight, there can be no uncertainty; the *observer* is entirely satisfied and at rest. On the other hand it is obvious that *doubt* and *opinion* are necessarily accompanied by "mental unrest." But what is the state of affairs with *knowledge* based on logical conclusions? The final proposition of a proof is "known." The discursive movement back and forth, the "unrest" of argumentation, has already taken place; when the conclusion is reached, all that belongs, so to speak, to the past. Nevertheless this unrest remains latent in the results of knowing; it is continuously present as a condition. In *belief*, however, both elements —the assent and the mental unrest—are *ex æequo*,[8] equally valid, coeval, and equally potent. "The movement [of the mind] is not yet stilled; rather there remains in it a searching and a pondering of that which it believes—although it nevertheless assents to what is

believed with the utmost firmness [*firmissime*]"[9] The "although" suggests the somewhat violent character of the connection. What we have is not really a compound, rather an antithesis: unstilled, persistent thinking *in spite* of unshaken assent.

It is astonishing to see with what outspoken candor a theologian such as Thomas Aquinas describes this element of uncertainty in the act of belief. In contrast to insight and knowledge, he says, it is part of the nature of belief to leave doubts possible.[10] This possibility is based on the fact that the believer's intellect is not really satisfied; rather, the mind, insofar as it believes, is operating not on its own but on alien soil.[11]

"Doubt" and *cogitatio* are, of course, not the same thing. Doubt restricts the unconditionality of assent; but what we have here called "mental unrest" is set in motion precisely because the assent of belief is unconditional and without reservation. We must discuss this matter in more precise and concrete terms.

Before the returned prisoner of war brought me news about the brother I had thought dead, no unrest really existed; instead my mind had come to terms with the finality of resignation. But my peace is suddenly shattered by these tidings. I am first and foremost confronted with the question of whether or not I should believe it.

But this is a different kind of unrest from the sort we have just been discussing. For this unrest is *abolished* as soon as I come to my decision to regard the news as true; such unrest is cast off at the instant that I "believe." (Incidentally, it would also be eliminated by the decision *not* to believe.) Only now, however, along with the assent of belief itself, a new sort of unrest is aroused, is indeed caused by the assent. Once I regard the news as unconditionally true, I am tormented by the need to form a picture of the reality which is both revealed and concealed by the news. And at the same time I know that I shall never succeed in doing that. Precisely this is the "mental unrest" which the conviction of the truth of what is believed in itself evokes, and which is therefore an inescapable accompaniment of the act of belief. There is no alternative; the believer is bound to be restive in this sense. "The cognition of belief does not quiet the craving, but rather kindles it."[12]

But once again we must recall to mind the *ex aequo* reverse of the coin: that the firmness of the believer's assent to the truth of what he believes is neither affected nor restricted in the slightest by that "mental unrest"—insofar as real belief is involved. By this firmness we mean not only that "willed" adherence to a decision once taken which is dependent purely upon volition, but

also the calm sense of contemplating that reality which is both concealed and revealed in the testimony of the witness. For what the act of belief truly aims at is reality and not a message or a report; "it [the act of belief] does not stop at something that is said, but at something that is."[13] The believer partakes truly of this reality; he touches it, and it becomes present to him—all the more so the more he is capable, by loving identification with the witness, of seeing with the latter's eyes and from his position.

Thus the great teachers have had no scruples, on occasion, about breaking down the linguistic barriers they themselves have set up and calling belief "cognition," "insight," and "knowledge,"[14] or even speaking of the "*light* of belief," by which "one sees what one believes."[15]

To be sure, the certainty of the believer cannot possibly stretch farther than the insight and reliability of the witness on whom he depends. If, therefore, we read again and again in the old theory of belief that the certainty of belief transcends the certainty of knowledge and insight by an infinite amount,[16] we must consider what grounds there are for this statement. The reason for that transcendent certainty does not lie in the fact that certainty of *belief* is involved, but rather that the

believer has to do with a witness whose insight and truthfulness infinitely exceed all human measures. Belief is more certain than any imaginable human insight—not insofar as it is belief, but insofar as it properly rests upon *divine speech*.

VI

THOSE who speak without qualification of "belief" or a "believing" person are usually using the word in its exclusively religious sense. "Preferably," Kant states, belief amounts to "the acceptance of the principles of a religion."[1]

Yet we must not imagine that we can step from our proceeding discussion of the meaning of belief straight to the meaning of the religious concept of faith. True, this concept is not an altogether "new" and "different" one. All the elements of meaning in the word "belief,"

as we have so far analyzed them, continue to pertain. Belief still means: to accept something unconditionally as real and true on the testimony of someone else who understands the matter out of his own knowledge. Similarly, all we have so far said concerning the importance of the function of belief in the affairs of our fellow men continues to hold true. Any healthy human society depends upon the ability of its members to communicate and to believe. However, to say all this is not to say that *religious* belief is either meaningful or necessary. We have not yet proved that religious belief is legitimately possible at all. For such proof some further conditions must be met, conditions which can scarcely be taken for granted. On the contrary, it almost appears as if man's tendency is, precisely, *not* to meet these conditions, insofar as the problem is left to him. To repeat: what is required here is not simply a further step along a prepared path, but a leap.

First of all, however, we must state more precisely what we mean by the concept of "religious belief." The Kantian definition ("acceptance of the principles of a religion") is indisputable but vague. Thomas comes closer to the mark when he says that faith refers to the reality of God insofar as it is inaccessible to human

knowledge.[2] However, even this statement fails to do justice to the crucial factor. For we have already demonstrated that the crucial factor of belief never consists in the matters which are believed. The believer, of whatever sort, is not primarily concerned with a given matter, but with a given someone. This someone, the witness, the authority, is "the principal thing,"[3] since *without* his testimony the matter would not be believed at all. Herein lies the decisive difference between religious belief and every other kind of belief: the Someone on whose testimony the religious believer accepts a matter as true and real—that Someone is God Himself. The telling difference, therefore, is that in a manner scarcely to be encountered anywhere else in the world[4] the content of the testimony and the person of the witness are identical. God Himself reveals to men the *res divina non visa*, that is to say, His own Being and Works, which are normally hidden from man; and men believe the self-revealing God. *Cui magis de Deo quam Deo credam;* "Whom should I sooner believe in regard to God than God?"[5]

It was St. Ambrose who coined that statement, and St. Augustine who expanded upon it. In its latter form it has become a textbook maxim.[6] Three distinctions are made: *Deo credere, Deum credere, in Deum credere.*

"*Deo credere* means: to believe that what God says is true . . . ; thus we also believe a man, whereas we do not believe 'in' a man. *Deum credere* means: to believe that He is God. *In Deum credere* means: believingly to love, believingly to go to Him, believingly to cling to Him and be joined to His Members." Thomas Aquinas has written a commentary on this text,[7] and lays considerable stress upon the unity of the three aspects. These are not three different acts, he says, but one and the same act,[8] in which man believes God (*Deo*, *Deum*) and believes in God (*in Deum*).[9] This, then, is the basic structure of the act of religious faith. With this in mind, let us look further into the matter.

We shall continue to regard the subject from the philosophical point of view, as we have done heretofore. This is a *philosophical* essay. That means, first of all, that it deals with something other than theology. By theology we mean the effort to interpret the documents of sacred tradition and the revelation embodied in that tradition. A theological theory of belief, then, would remain within the context of those documents. Its first task would be to examine those documents for what they have to say about belief. For example, there would be a discussion of belief in its relation to Incarnation,

Grace, Baptism, Church, or belief as a foretaste of the future vision of God to be vouchsafed us when we leave this world behind—and so on. A philosophical essay on belief, however, does not take up such subjects.

Another fruitful approach might be a *psychological* examination of belief as a psychic act to be described empirically, arising as a regular thing within a certain nexus of motivations. Then again, there is also the possibility of considering the phenomenon of belief from the viewpoint of *religious history*. The *philosophical* approach, however, is something altogether unlike any of these. It differs from the "scientific" mode of the psychologist and historian chiefly in not attacking the subject under discussion from any one, explicitly stated, special aspect, but in investigating its ultimate meaning from every conceivable point of view, against the horizon of total reality. The philosophical thinker considers the meaning and site of "belief" within the whole extent of human reality. He differs from the theologian as follows: The theologian's eye is fixed upon the documents of sacred tradition, which it is his office to interpret. The philosopher's eye, on the contrary, is, ideally speaking, fixed upon the reality which is empirically encountered. Since, however, in keeping with his task, he must examine every conceivable aspect of his theme,

it would be unphilosophical to exclude from his range of vision any attainable information on reality, whether this information be provided by one or another of the sciences, or by theology. This should suggest clearly enough what a demanding task the philosophical thinker has assumed—a task full of difficulties and controversies. It might almost be called a hopeless task, if philosophizing itself were not an act of hope.

We have already implied that religious faith is not simply a kind of continuation, elaboration, or further development of "belief in general." Similarly, we can assent to everything that has so far been said about belief and nevertheless be faced with an insuperable difficulty the moment we are asked to accept *religious* belief as something meaningful or actually necessary. The difficulty is even greater when we are asked to put such belief into practice existentially.

The obstacle which must be leaped rather than climbed consists in the difficulty of understanding why man's nature and situation should be such that he cannot make do with what is naturally accessible to him. Why should man be dependent upon information which he himself could never find and which, even if found, is not susceptible to rational examination? To be sure,

no believer can ever directly examine the validity of what he believes. Still, belief in religious revelation is peculiar in that the reason for this non-examinability lies both in the nature of the message and in the nature of the recipient. This non-examinability is fundamental to the entire concept and cannot be done away with. No man, no matter how brilliant or how saintly, can undertake to evaluate the tidings that God has become man in order to enable us to participate in the life of God. He cannot test this message against reality. That is manifestly impossible.

And yet that is only one element in the "outrageous" summons to believe in such things as the Incarnation of God. We are not only summoned to accept as real and true a set of facts which we can in no way examine; we are also referred to a witness who never meets us directly, as do our human interlocutors, but who, nevertheless, demands of us the kind of absolute and unconditional assent which we are prepared to give in no other case.

Even this simple description of what takes place in the act of belief in religious revelation brings clearly to the fore the terms to which we must subscribe, and the difficulty of the whole matter. The hurdle is very high, and yet we are supposed to leap it. Nowadays, says Romano

Guardini, the question at issue is not so much whether this or that tenet of faith is true; rather, it has become hard for men to grasp "how the demand to believe can with any justification be made at all."[10]

"Where knowledge suffices we have no need of belief"—that is a proposition[11] which at first sounds highly plausible. But the question is, by what marks do we recognize where knowledge suffices and where it does not? Naturally no one can say whether something suffices without simultaneously considering what it is to suffice for. If anyone should therefore ask whether what is naturally knowable should not be sufficient for man, he can answer adequately only if he has first formulated what he considers a meaningful human life to be, that is to say, a life in keeping with man's true nature and also with his real situation in the world.

Anyone, for example, who is convinced that man by nature lives within the field of force of an absolutely superhuman reality, and that admonition and instruction can be imparted to him from there—or to put it differently, anyone who acknowledges divine speech directed toward man as something possible or even likely—has by that token already said that his own natural knowledge is, *if* God has really spoken to man, not "sufficient" for a truly human life. Conviction of the possibility of

revelation therefore not only includes a particular conception of God, but also a particular conception of the metaphysical nature of man.

It is clear that revelation is inconceivable if God is not conceived as a personal Being capable of speech. Yet as soon as natural man is seriously faced with this conception of God, he finds something shocking in it. "It is always shocking," says C. S. Lewis in his *Miracles*, "to meet life where we thought we were alone. 'Look out!' we cry, 'it's *alive*.' . . . An 'impersonal God'—well and good. A subjective God of beauty, truth and goodness, inside our own heads—better still. A formless life-force surging through us, a vast power which we can tap—best of all. But God Himself, alive, pulling at the other end of the cord, perhaps approaching at an infinite speed, the hunter, king, husband—that is quite another matter. . . . There comes a moment when people who have been dabbling in religion ('Man's search for God'!) suddenly draw back. Supposing we really found Him? . . . Worse still, supposing He had found us?

"So it is a sort of Rubicon. One goes across; or not. But if one does, there is no manner of security against miracles. One may be in for *anything*."[12]

To that I have only this to add: If God is conceived as a personal Being, as a Someone rather than a Some-

thing, and a Someone Who can speak, then there is no safety from—revelation.

This, however, is not the only premise which must be absorbed if faith in religious revelation is to be at all attainable as a living human act. Man must also have understood himself as a being by nature open to the divine speech, capable of being reached by it. I do not merely mean the openness of the human mind to the obvious reality of the world, for that is a faculty of all beings that have minds. Mind, indeed, can actually be defined as "receptivity to Being." And this cognitive apprehension of reality can be considered as a form of hearing divine speech, since things, by virtue of their origin in the creative Logos of God, themselves possess "verbal character."[13] I am referring here, however, not to openness to this "natural" revelation of God in the created world, but to the power to apprehend a new and direct form of divine speech which surpasses what has already been "said" in the natural world. This latter form alone can be called "revelation" in the strict sense. And openness to this also must be understood as a faculty inherent in the human mind by nature; otherwise we cannot say that belief is something that may rightfully be demanded of men. That special openness, to be

sure, is inherent in the human mind not on the basis of its spirituality, but on the basis of its creatureliness. To be a creature means: to be continually receiving being and essence from the divine Source and Creator, and in this respect, therefore, never to be finally completed. Unlike the works made by man, which at some given moment are "finished," creaturely things remain indefinitely malleable because they can never become independent of the force of the Creator Who communicates being to them. They do not cease to be clay "in the potter's hand"; they remain by nature, by virtue of their creatureliness, continually in expectation of a new intervention by God.[14] This intervention may take place in the form of that vital communication which theology calls "Grace," or in the form of revelation.

It is rather important to see that receptivity to a possible revelation is itself *not* something "supernatural." Rather, it belongs to the human mind's natural state of being. For the same reason the soul is *by nature* capable of receiving the "supernatural" New Life of Grace (*naturaliter anima est gratiae capax*[15]). It is important to see that, because it then follows that belief in revelation itself is in a certain sense natural.[16] Not only can man be expected to believe; but *not* to believe would be downright contrary to human nature—*if* God has

spoken to man in an audible fashion. Unbelief, insofar as that means the refusal to believe God's audible speech, is violating more than an edict "within theology"; it is violating a standard which is set by the natural existential situation of man in the world. Unbelief contradicts what man is by nature.[17]

To be sure, it is one thing to acknowledge this idea of the natural receptivity of the mind *in abstracto*, as a tenet of philosophical anthropology. It is quite something else again to put it into practice. And of course belief in revelation, as a living act, can come about only if a man's self-understanding goes beyond mere conceptual thinking, if it shapes and governs the inner style of life; if, in other words, the receptivity inherent in the created mind is "realized" existentially. For that to happen, the complete, boundless energy of the heart is needed, along with extreme seismographical sensitivity and alertness. For there is an infinitude of hidden, often barely discernible modes of shutting the doors of the mind and heart. Undoubtedly there exists, for example, a lack of receptivity which is accompanied by no express gestures of refusal or rejection, which is simply *inattention*. Gabriel Marcel contends that the conditions of modern life not only favor but almost compel such inat-

tention, which makes belief in practice rather improbable.[18] Yet Pascal, too, was aware of this very problem. Witness this aphorism in the *Pensées*, which suggests how easily a man can shut himself off from the whole of truth virtually with a clear conscience: "If you do not take the trouble to know the truth, there is enough truth at hand so that you can live in peace. But if you crave it with all your heart, then it is not enough to know it."[19] It is no excessively difficult matter to content oneself with what one already knows ("where knowledge suffices . . . "); but those who truly throw their souls open to the whole of truth expect, since they nowhere see the whole, that there will always be an additional new light beyond what they already know.

Those who are thus concerned for the whole of truth may find themselves obliged to exercise a highly special mode of critical caution, which, however, may be regarded as just the opposite, that is, as the expression of an altogether uncritical mentality. Those who accept nothing as true and valid which has not withstood their own exacting investigation are generally regarded as critical observers. But what about the person who, fearing that by such a procedure he may overlook some element in the whole of truth, prefers to accept less complete certainty rather than incur a possible loss of contact with

reality? Can he not also claim to be thinking critically?[20] It is certainly a debatable question which of two medical procedures is the more "critical" when sheer saving of life is at stake: a procedure which accepts only absolutely tested methods, or one which considers every method that offers some reasonable promise of success, even though it may be based only on a presumption. (And surely we may say that divine speech addressed directly to men is not going to be trafficking in trivialities, that the "saving of life" is truly at stake.) At any rate, the person who is primarily concerned with missing nothing, with omitting no chance to arrive at the whole of such vital truth, can scarcely be charged with being of "uncritical mind" if he prefers "not to wait for the fullest evidence . . . and show his caution, not in remaining uninfluenced by the existing report of a divine message, but by obeying it though it might be more clearly attested."[21]

As might be expected, the intellect bent on critical autonomy will take such a course only with reluctance. Nevertheless, this resistance should not be quickly branded as arrogance. The matter is highly complex, and we do not clarify it much by apodictic simplifications.

The salient fact remains that man does not stand,

toward the self-revealing God, in the situation of an independent partner, equal in rank, who may be "interested" or not as he pleases. If a man becomes aware of certain teachings, or of certain data which purport to be the Word of God—then he cannot possibly assume the right to remain "neutral for the present." This is a point to which John Henry Newman[22] repeatedly adverts. Men, he says, are greatly inclined to "wait quietly" to see whether proofs of the actuality of revelation will drop into their laps, as though they were in the position of arbitrators and not in that of the needy. "They have decided to test the Almighty in a passionless judicial fashion, with total lack of bias, with sober minds." It is an error as common as it is fatal, says Newman, to think that "truth may be approached *without homage*."[23]

VII

In the course of his work Karl Jaspers has developed a concept of belief which in spite of ultimate divergence seems so closely akin to the one outlined here that we must briefly discuss it. This discussion is of some importance because Jaspers appears to speak on this point as representative of a whole type of contemporary thought which is engaged in dispute with the Christian tradition.

First: Jaspers evidently makes use of the term *belief* as a precise name for what he has in mind. He defines belief as "the certainty of truth which I cannot prove

in the same way as scientific knowledge of finite things may be proved."[1] He asserts that this belief links man "with the ground of Being";[2] that it is "the substance of a personal life,"[3] the fulfilling and motivating element in the depth of man,"[4] "the foundation . . . of our thinking,"[5] and "the indispensable source of all genuine philosophizing."[6]

Secondly: If we ask what Jaspers singles out as matters which are to be accepted as true and real on the basis of such belief, we receive such answers as the following: "the idea of one God";[7] "that the Unconditioned exists as the basis of action";[8] "the unclosed nature of the created universe";[9] "the ultimate and only refuge with God";[10] "man can live under guidance by way of God";[11] "the reality of the world has a dwindling actuality between God and existence."[12]

Thirdly: After having read such sentences with complete assent, though perhaps with some surprise that they are presented as *philosophical* utterances, we begin to feel uncertainty when Jaspers declares that they are by no means "to be taken as communication of any content." Indeed, he says, at that point there begins "the error in the statement of philosophical dogmas."[13] "Belief does not mean a specific content, does not mean a dogma."[14] Jaspers here seems to be concerned with prevent-

ing the object of belief from being imprisoned in any rigid didactic formula—in which effort he is undoubtedly right. The object of belief cannot be delimited and fixed precisely, its content comprehensively described, as is the case with demonstrable items of knowledge. Nevertheless it is scarcely possible to deny that in those dogmas some content is stated and communicated!

Fourthly: The fundamental fallacy of Jaspers' conception, however, comes fully to light when we pose the question which is decisive for all belief: *Who* really is believed; who is the Someone on whose testimony propositions "which I cannot prove"[15] are nevertheless accepted as true? There is no unequivocal answer to this question in Jaspers' works. Moreover, the question itself is not even expressly discussed. And in evading the question, Jaspers' reasoning founders upon a serious error. True, Jaspers speaks quite clearly of that "trust without guarantee"[16] which makes belief what it is; true, he acknowledges what is virtually the same thing, the necessity for authority: "Even the philosopher must somewhere yield precedence to authority, though where its rule begins and ends cannot be fully determined"; "philosophical belief, incomprehensible to itself, demands at one point uncomprehended authority."[17] This, however, is where we must take issue. For the possible

embodiment of this authority is left completely vague. To whom is that "trust without guarantee" to be vouchsafed?[18] Moreover, contrary to everything we might expect, Jaspers abruptly states with great sharpness that the philosopher must "cling to no authority, nowhere receive truth as a dogma, nor owe his salvation to any historically handed-down revelation."[19] No such submission, he declares, can be asked of the mature mind, because it would mean "destruction of his freedom and his dignity."[20] Which is nothing less than an express negation of belief itself.

(Incidentally, Jaspers lists the reasons which have been advanced in favor of submission to authority; none of these reasons, he contends, is convincing because each of them "denies freedom."[21] He names the following reasons: "Man is too weak to be able to be thrown on his own resources; authority . . . is a blessing to him; without the firm support of authority man would succumb to a casual subjectivity; as man becomes aware of his insignificance, he puts himself under the rule of authority; the tradition of authority has existed for thousands of years. This alone is a testimony of its truth."[22] We might possibly take up these points one by one, in order to see whether they hinder man's freedom. But it is plain that *none* of these reasons prompts

the Christian to believe, and that the sole reason which actually does prompt him does *not* deny freedom. This sole reason is: that God has spoken.)

If we consider the single strands which Jaspers has attempted to intertwine in his conception of "philosophical belief," we find ourselves somewhat perplexed, even as we are impressed by the seriousness of his confrontation with the question. His conception is, of course, far more highly differentiated than our résumé of it suggests; but in summary its basic tenets have perhaps come into clearer focus. And what is revealed is a deep split in Jaspers' position. His stern rejection of belief as incompatible with the freedom and dignity of the mind simply cannot stand side by side with the almost beseeching gesture with which he reminds us of the necessity of belief (lacking belief, man is utterly "at the mercy of thought, opinion, ideas, doctrines, whence come violence, chaos, and ruin"[23]). And when Jaspers explicitly accepts ideas which are included in the *corpus* of Christian revelation ("we philosophize out of the Biblical religion and there apprehend irreplaceable truths"[24]), the fact nevertheless remains that he just as explicitly refuses to accept these doctrines as "revelation," that is to say, on the testimony of God. Again, we

must repeat the dictum of Thomas Aquinas, for it seems to apply precisely to Jaspers: *ea quae sunt fidei alio modo tenet quam per fidem*;[25] he regards much of what is said in Christian doctrine as true and to be honored; but he does so in a fashion different from that of belief.

In this, however, Jaspers represents a mental type that has become prevalent over much of the territory of the old Western world, threatened as it is by secularization. That type is characterized by two principal traits: first, by reluctance to abandon the content of traditional religious faith, "irreplaceable truths"; second, by the incapacity to accept that content on the basis of belief in the revelation—though that belief alone has made these truths accessible to us and is their ultimate bulwark.

We all know that we can hardly begin to talk about the "modern spirit" without hearing the term "unbelief" crop up early in the discussion. We should be reminded, however, that the great tradition of Western theology recommends extreme caution in the use of this word. Above all we should clarify what precisely is meant by "unbelief" (as sin). It happens very often that a person hears the tidings of the faith but is not reached by them (which may very well be caused by the internal style

of those tidings). The message is simply not perceived as something that can really concern the hearer; and in that case, of course, no belief arises. But such non-belief cannot be termed "unbelief." In another instance, the content of the tidings may be well grasped; but for a wide variety of reasons it does not occur to the hearer that they can possibly be a supernatural message, divine speech, "revelation" in the strict sense of that word: and therefore no genuine belief comes into being. But once more "unbelief" would not be the right term for this lack of belief. Nor can we call unbelievers those who refuse to become involved at all and will not give their mind to considering the credibility of the testimony. Such refusal may be indefensible; it may be wrong; but it is not identical with unbelief.[26] Unbelief in the precise sense of the term is only that mental act in which someone deliberately refuses assent to a truth which he has recognized with sufficient plainness to be God's speech.[27]

One may ask whether unbelief in this sense ever occurs. To this we must reply that in actuality the usual counterpoise to belief seems to be less sheer unbelief than that inveterate inattentiveness of which we have already spoken. There is no sense in attacking this inattentiveness as "unbelief." Certainly it is not going to be

conquered by such misnaming. Little is accomplished by vague lamentations over contemporary unbelief. We must take into account the extreme complexity of the matter. One root of the complexity lies in the fact that man "can also affirm God by way of partially *false* concepts."[28] Thus, French theology has recently reformulated and justified anew the old idea that it is quite possible "to affirm God in truth while at the same time *denying* him on the plane of a given set of notions."[29]

There is another aspect of the matter that should be repeatedly recalled to mind: that the "knower" naturally finds it especially hard to believe. This is why Thomas Aquinas placed him at the side of the martyr.[30] He who has attained to a certain stage of critical consciousness cannot exempt himself from thinking through the opposing arguments raised both by "philosophers" and "heretics." He must confront them. For this reason, Thomas says, the critical thinker who is at the same time a believer is to be compared with the martyr who sheds his blood, who refuses to abandon the truth of faith in spite of the "arguments" of violence.

The truth of faith cannot be definitively proved by any rational argument. The fact constitutes the believer's predicament. Hence the old rule of thumb: "The

Christian who wishes to conduct a disputation on his belief should not attempt to prove his belief, but to defend it."[31] The inward predicament of the believer is also of the same nature. Ultimately the only possible opposition the believer can offer to his *own* rational arguments is defensive; he cannot attack, he can only hold firm. And the question arises whether, for a time at any rate, this holding firm may not inevitably take the form of silent defenselessness, as in the case of the martyr.

VIII

He who conceives of God as a Someone capable of speech, and of man as a being by nature receptive to God, necessarily regards "revelation" as possible, perhaps even to be expected. Nevertheless, he need not necessarily think that it actually has taken place. It is obviously one thing to consider something possible and another to consider it as a real happening. But belief in revelation can be supported only on the ground that God has actually spoken in a manner audible to man. And this fact, for its part, must be naturally knowable; man cannot in turn be asked to believe it.

It is sheer waste of time to discuss the actuality of a divine revelation with someone who, on the basis of his conception of God and man, denies its very possibility. And even one who considers divine speech directly addressed to man as something in the order of things and to be expected must still confront the question: In what form could such a divine communication have taken place, and how could it be distinguished, how recognized? Once again, in order for belief to take place as a conceivable human act, we must clear an intellectual hurdle. That hurdle is, understandably, a peculiarly difficult one for modern man. The difficulty is by no means deliberately invented, reprehensible, and "his own fault"; rather, it is bound up with the transformation that has taken place in man's conception of the natural world and its dimensions. Our knowledge of the reality of Creation, as against ancient and medieval conceptions of the cosmos, has been profoundly corrected and enriched. "There came a voice from Heaven"—*vox facta est de caelo*—was for Dante and his contemporaries a vivid conception which they saw no need to challenge. Contemporaries of Einstein, however, cannot give the same credence to the simple statement, when even the material reality of the world has grown harder and harder to fathom. "We can no longer experience God

as operating in our world with the same naïve trust as was possible in earlier times."[1] And contemporary theology, we must concede, has provided few intellectual tools with which to conquer the legitimate difficulty that has thus arisen.

Karl Rahner called "amazement at the silence of God" and "the absence of God in the world" a "genuine and powerful experience." Those who have had this experience, he says, have tended to give it an atheistic interpretation, "looking upon it as evidence of the non-existence of God," whereas it is simply "the experience that God does not fit into the world-picture."[2] Christian metaphysics, he continues, has always *known* this "but . . . has *lived* it too little."[3] Moreover "the vulgar version of Christianity has failed to deal with" the element of truth in that "troubled atheism."[4] The task before us, he contends, is to "accept" that experience and "not to repress it with the premature, cheap apologetics of an anthropomorphic 'belief in God.' "[5]

All this helps to explain the ever-increasing difficulty men have in conceiving of audible speech of God, directed straight to them—that is to say, "revelation" in the strict sense—as a concrete event taking place here and now. But this situation also holds forth a rare challenge. The time has come to discard ideas which are

no longer viable and to reconstruct faith along lines which will be acceptable to the modern consciousness.

Thomas Aquinas has described the event of revelation in a manner which, it seems to me, might do as well for us today as it did for his contemporaries, despite the transformation in men's picture of the world. There is nothing "medieval" in his formulation; above all it is completely untinged by the notion that God is a Being living in the "apartment next door." Revelation, he tells us in the *Summa against the Pagans*,[6] is simply the communication of a spiritual inner light whereby human cognition is enabled to observe something that would otherwise remain in darkness.

In immediacy and clarity this image leaves nothing to be desired. Nevertheless it conveys the fact that this process of communication is a mysterious one, whose initial phase may not be grasped by the pictorial imagination. Yet it is during that phase that the real drama of revelation takes place: the sudden, flashing illumination; the wind's stirring the still motionless surface of water, which straightway receives this "in-spiration" and passes it on to infinity. The innermost core of the event we call revelation is the divine act of communication itself. That, however, remains of necessity in-

accessible to all human apprehension and utterly remote from the pictorial imagination.

But "communication" is not complete when something has been said; the message must be heard and received by the person for whom it is meant. Only then has true communication come about. The light communicated by revelation is intended for "man." And "man" means *all* men. The divine light is conveyed to the "inspired" first recipient, and is thereafter passed from one man to the next. This process, the diffusion of the event of revelation, is less inscrutable than the initial flash of revelation itself. It lies within the scope of our imaginations. Moreover, we see how this pattern of emanation from a single point-source corresponds to the patterns of spiritual life as manifested throughout history.

In all other cases when mankind acquires new, hitherto unknown truths, what happens is that an elect individual or one endowed with genius observes a new aspect of reality or a hitherto undiscovered portion of the real world, and that his new knowledge is then passed on to others: by communication, publication, teaching, tradition. All subsequent versions show clear gradations of greater or lesser closeness to the original find. Thus, only a very few persons are capable of shar-

ing in the understanding of Einstein's unified field theory out of their own knowledge; a somewhat larger circle can grasp the more or less precise paraphrases at second hand; while "the public" has only very vague notions of what Einstein actually meant—which in no way implies that the public cannot participate, in a completely legitimate fashion, in the truth of the prime discoverer.

If, then, we encounter this same dispensation and pattern wherever "sacred tradition" claims to preserve and present what Plato calls "a message handed down to us from a divine source,"[7] there is no reason to be surprised. On the contrary, that is quite what we should expect.

What we have said above about the public's participation in the unified field theory has its parallel in the realm of belief in revelation. This calls for some careful thought. Although of course greater or lesser proximity to the source is not, in the latter realm, determined only —nor even primarily—by intellectual capacity, the realm of belief, too, has its "multitude," corresponding to "the public," who "comprehend" the tradition only within limits. Nevertheless—and this is the critical factor—they can truly partake of the truth of the divine Word as it was imparted to the first inspired recipient.

"Implicit faith"—the *fides implicita* of the Schools—is acknowledged and practiced everywhere. In theology, to be sure, the concept of *fides implicita* has given rise to vehement dispute; it is no very long way from it to the opprobrious epithet "blind faith."[8] The German word for this is *Köhlerglaube*—charcoal burner's faith—and goes back to the story of the charcoal burner who met a learned scholar on the bridge at Prague and was asked what he believed. "I believe what the Church believes," the charcoal burner responded. It seems to me that this much-ridiculed man gave an answer by no means nonsensical and contemptible. On the contrary, his reply was intelligent, to the point, and precise, and would be perfectly acceptable in all other fields. If, for example, I were asked my opinion on the structure of the cosmos or the nature of matter, I would reply with a reference to modern physics. It is true that I have only a vague knowledge of its conclusions; but by subscribing to the opinions of men like Planck, Bohr, de Broglie, and Heisenberg I truly share in those conclusions, although the exact manner of my sharing may be rather hard to define. In precisely the same way *fides implicita* can enable the simplest mind, the one farthest removed from the original light as well as the only half instructed, to "belong" and to have a share in the revealed truth—

by virtue of his believing tie to one who knows at first hand—which in this case means not only to the first recipient of the divine speech but to its Author Himself. The great teachers of Christendom, at any rate, never hesitated to postulate the unity of true believers, and gave the broadest interpretation to this concept. They have asserted, for example, that whoever in the pre-Christian and extra-Christian worlds has accepted the wisdom warranted by sacred tradition, whoever has accepted the tenet that God, in a manner pleasing to Him, will be a liberator of men, has believed *implicite* in Christ.[9]

We can therefore conceive of the process of revelation, the actual reaching out of divine speech to historical man, as proceeding along such lines. Yet we are still faced with the difficult question of how and by what means a given claim to be divine revelation can, so to speak, present its credentials—not so much to the first recipient, for it may be assumed that he has found himself in a situation admitting of no doubt, but to all the others who through him have been informed of the message entrusted to him. How, in a word, do we recognize that something which lays claim to being revelation is really of divine origin? If there is no way to answer this question by the methods of rational argu-

mentation, then there can be no such thing as genuine belief, since this is defined as accepting God's word as the warranty for the truth. Belief would become an altogether arbitrary matter.

This, of course, is not the place even to attempt a detailed answer. But we can speak here of a few of the conditions which must be met if such an attempt is not to be a hopeless undertaking from the start.

To begin with, it may be assumed that any appeal to "classical" arguments (miracles, prophecies, authenticity of the Biblical accounts, the "Church" as a historical phenomenon, and so on) will lead to nothing unless we first recover the living realization of how and why "revelation" is possible at all, and to be expected. In other words, we must first engage upon some meditation concerning the metaphysical situation of man as a creature.

Furthermore, we are not dealing here with the apprehension of facts of nature, but with the illumination of a particular and fundamental facet of existence. Hence the investigator must be prepared to offer a receptivity and attentiveness extending to the depths of his soul, a lack of bias which goes far beyond "scientific objectivity." Such openness cannot be taken for granted, of course. In fact it is constantly endangered by the multi-

farious interests of the human person anxious to preserve his independence.

It is (thirdly) virtually impossible for the question at issue to be decided by the means of cognition available to the isolated individual. This is rather a task that must be attacked in a concerted fashion. All possible techniques of intellectual co-operation must be utilized. All that men have learned about group effort to achieve knowledge must be brought into play.

Naturally a project of this sort would not preclude the infinite variety of possible means of certainty which exist alongside the "objective" approach and which have great weight for certain persons while they may mean nothing to others. In all belief the person of the witness is "the main thing"; and each person's apprehension has its special modes, just as the decision on belief always has its place in the personal history of the believer himself. Thus it can happen that one man, while contemplating the cathedral of Rouen, is suddenly flooded with the certainty that this "fullness" must be the sign of divine revelation;[10] while another, as Simone Weil reports concerning herself,[11] may accept the truth of Christ on the simple evidence of the rapture flooding the face of a young communicant. Who is to pass judgment on the legitimacy of such "arguments"?

To be sure, there are also such representative figures as St. Augustine or Pascal whose paths, though highly personal, have stood for those of many others—for a whole generation, for a century, for the kindred in spirit of all times and places. One of the greatest of such figures is, it seems to me, John Henry Newman, who in his formal writings and letters traced, with a completely "modern," self-critical keenness, the separate stages of his own acquisition of certainty—a process, incidentally, whose beginning was marked by a curious prayer which the young Oxford fellow intoned along with his group of friends: he prayed that if he should be led to the conclusion that truth resided with the Catholic Church, then might God sooner permit him to die than to be compelled to act in conformity with so terrifying an insight.[12]

IX

Is it good for man to believe? Would he be cheating himself of an essential wealth of existence if he were to refuse to believe?

If this question is referred solely to the relationships of men among one another, it can scarcely be answered with a clear yes or no. A community in which men did not dare talk to one another with impunity, or to meet each other in ordinary situations with trust and belief, would be something inhuman. In such a community men would be robbed of the uniquely human possibility of one man's participating, by listening, in another's pos-

session of reality. The wonderful opportunity provided by communication would be forfeited. Deadly silence would convert community living into a parched wasteland. Such a situation is by no means unreal, as everyone knows; there can indeed exist "a boundless muteness . . . in the heart of the clamorous times."[1] Yet our experience with this very situation teaches us that it is not wise, under all conditions, to believe one's human interlocutor. Such belief is "good" only to the extent that what he says truly throws open to the believer a new aspect of reality, one which would otherwise remain inaccessible.

On the other hand, it seems abundantly clear that such precautions do not apply to religious belief. Man can scarcely find anything better and more meaningful to do than "believingly to unite with the knowledge of God."[2] So it is. Nevertheless, we may appreciate the full implications of this apparently so obvious thought only when we consider not only the fact of revelation but also its *content*.

What is this content? Of what does the divine speech speak? We can only answer this question by referring to Christianity, the historical form that belief in revelation has taken—the only form, incidentally, within the area of our present world-European civilization, which has made such a claim for itself. What, then, is the

object of the divine revelation revealed in Christ? Only theology can say, of course. But we are not plunging into theology, I think, if we simply take note of what theology says.

According to the theologians, the essence of the Christian faith can be summed up in two words. Those two words are Trinity and Incarnation. The "universal teacher" of Christendom has said that the whole content of the truth of Christian faith can be reduced to the dogma of the Trinitarian God and the dogma that man participates in the life of God through Christ.[3]

(The outsider, who has the impression of a bewildering multiplicity of dogmas and ideas, will ask himself: What about all the rest; what about the knotty problems of sacraments and sacramentals, hell and "purgatory," veneration of Mary, cult of saints, visions, "apparitions," and so on? As regards the last two items—which in fact can occasionally obscure a view of the essentials—it should be clearly understood that they fall outside the category of things which we are required to accept on the testimony of God. Even the Church's "acknowledgment" of certain apparitions means no more than the following:[4] first, that nothing about these phenomena offends against the Faith or the ethical principles of life; and secondly, that there are sufficient signs attesting

that these things may be considered true and genuine *fide humana*, on *human* testimony; for which reason, thirdly, it is not right simply to despise them. But all the rest—the dogma of the sacraments, of the Blessed Virgin, of the Last Things—can really be reduced to the two tenets named by Thomas Aquinas. This matter, however, can be conveyed only to one who already believes.)

Such is the character of this basically unitary content of divine revelation that the reality it affirms is, in a peculiar fashion, identical with the act of revelation and also with the witness. Earlier in this book[5] it was said that this is a situation almost without parallel anywhere else in the world. The "almost" was intended to leave room for the possibly sole exception, for the situation in which a person turns to another and says: "I love you." That statement, too, is not primarily supposed to inform another person of an objective fact separable from the speaker. Rather, it is a kind of self-witnessing; and the witnessed subject matter is given reality solely by having been spoken in such a manner. In keeping with this condition, the only way the partner can become aware of the love that is offered is by taking what is said into himself, by listening. Of course, the state of being loved

can simply happen to him, as to an immature child; but he can truly "know" it only by hearing the verbal avowal and "believing" it only then will the other's love become truly present to him; only then will he truly partake of it.

On a higher plane, the very same rule applies to divine revelation. In speaking to men God does not cause them to know objective facts, but He does throw open to them His own Being. The subject matter which forms the essential content of revelation—that man has been elected to participate in the divine life; that that divine life has been offered to him, in fact already given—this subject matter owes its reality to nothing but the fact that it is pronounced by God. It is real in that God reveals it. The situation is not that the "Incarnation" exists "anyhow" as a fact and is subsequently made known by the revelation. Rather, the Incarnation of God and the revelation in Christ are one and the same reality. For the believer there is once more the experience that he, in accepting the message of the self-revealing God, actually partakes of the divine life therein announced. There is no other way in which he could partake of it, save by belief. It is imparted to him—here the word "impart" is restored to its original meaning. Divine revelation is not an announcement of a report on reality, but the "im-

parting" of reality itself. That imparting takes effect, however, only upon the believer.

Only now can we answer the question of whether it is "good" for man to believe. And the answer will have to run somewhat as follows: If God has really spoken, then it is not only good to believe Him; rather, the act of believing generates those things which in fact are goodness and perfection for man. Receptively and trustfully hearing the truth, man gains a share not only in the "knowledge" of the divine Witness, but in His life itself.

Notes *and* Index

Notes

The quotations from the *Summa theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas are identified in the following notes only by numerals. For example, II, II, 2, 2 ad 1 means: Second Part of the Second Part, quaestio 2, articulus 2, reply to Objection 1. The same code is used for references to the commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. For example, 2 d. 24, 3, 5 means: Book Two, distinctio 24, quaestio 3, articulus 5. The titles of the other works of St. Thomas cited in the text are abbreviated as follows:

C. G. *Summa contra Gentes*
Ver. *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*
Car. *Quaestiones disputatae de caritate*
In Trin. Commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*
Rat. fid. *De rationibus fidei*

I

[1] Johannes Hoffmeister, *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* (2nd ed.; Hamburg, 1955), p. 19.

[2] I, 4, 3 ad 4; 1 d. 28, 2, 2.

[3] Cf. David Hume, *An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, 5, 2.

[4] Kant defines belief as acceptance of something as true on "objectively" and "theoretically" insufficient grounds. So certain is he of

this definition that he says he will not "waste time" on further explanation. Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. R. Schmidt (Philosophische Bibliothek, [Leipzig, 1944]), pp. 741 f.

[5] Grimm, J. and W., *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, article on *Glaube*, vol. IV, 1, 4, col. 7805.

[6] Trübners *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, article on *Glaube*, vol. III, p. 192.

[7] *The Century Dictionary* (New York: The Century Company, 1911), vol. I, p. 513, col. 1.

[8] Letter 147 (to Paulinus). Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 33, 599.

[9] 3 d. 24, 2, 1; cf. III, 7, 4.

[10] Cf. Alexis Decout, *L'acte de foi. Ses éléments logiques. Ses éléments psychologiques* (Paris, 1947), pp. 77, 79.

[11] *De praedestinatione Sanctorum*, cap. 2, 5. Migne, PL 44, 962 f.

[12] II, II, 8, 8 ad 2.

[13] Some writers have absurdly attempted to base a whole theory of the basic relationship between belief and knowledge on this improper meaning of the word "belief." For example S. Thompson ("A Paradox Concerning the Relation of Inquiry and Belief," *Journal of Religion*, Chicago, annual volume 1951) has advanced the thesis that research assumes "belief" in the possibility of the fact being investigated. An archaeologist, he says, would not undertake to search for a lost city if he did not "believe" the possibility that it once actually existed in the given region. That is of course undeniable, but it is also utterly uninteresting since it has nothing whatsoever to do with the problem of "belief and knowledge."

[14] *Perfectio intellectus et scientiae excedit cognitionem fidei quantum ad maiorem manifestationem non tamen quantum ad certiorem inhaesionem.* II, II, 4, 8 ad 3.

[15] *De ratione fidei est, quod homo sit certus de his, quorum habet fidem.* II, II, 112, 5 ad 2.

[16] John Henry Newman, "Faith and Doubt," in *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* (London, 1881), p. 216.

II

[1] II, II, 129, 6.

[2] Martin Buber, *Zwei Glaubensweisen* (Zurich, 1950).

[3] II, II, 11, 1.

[4] Cf. Ph. Dietz, *Wörterbuch zu Dr. Martin Luthers deutschen Schriften* (Leipzig, 1870), vol. II, p. 128.
[5] II, II, 5, 3; cf. II, II, 5, 3 ad 1.
[6] II, II, 11, 1.
[7] B. H. Merkelbach says in his *Summa Theologiae Moralis* (2nd ed.; Paris, 1935), vol. I, p. 534: *Propriissime credimus ea quae nobis non sunt evidentia, sed quae non dubitando admittimus* unice propter testimonium *seu auctoritatem alterius . . . etiam si non appareat testimonium esse verum.*
[8] Vol. IV, 1, 4, col. 7816.
[9] 3 d. 24, 3, 2 ad 1.

III

[1] Christian Pesch, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae* (Freiburg, 1908-16), vol. VIII, pp. 127 f.
[2] The text runs: *Intrare quisquam ecclesiam potest nolens, accedere ad altare potest nolens, accipere Sacramentum potest nolens: credere non potest nisi volens. In Johannis evangelium tract.* 26, 3. Migne, PL 35, 1607.
[3] *Über den Glauben. Religiöse Reden,* trans. Theodor Haecker (Leipzig, 1936), p. 49.
[4] Letter to Mrs. Froude dated June 27, 1848. See Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (New York, 1912), vol. I, p. 242 [London: Longmans & Co., 1912].
[5] André Gide, *So Be It, or The Chips Are Down* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1959), p. 146 [London: Chatto and Windus, 1960].
[6] [*Fides*] *quae in voluntate est . . .* Augustine, *De praedestinatione Sanctorum,* cap. 5, 10. Migne, PL 44, 968. Cf. also II, II, 6, 1 ad 3.
[7] *Scientia et intellectus habent certitudinem per id quod ad* cognitionem *pertinent. . . . Fides autem habet certitudinem ab eo quod est extra genus cognitionis, in genere* affectionis *existens.* 3, d. 23, 2, 3, 1 ad 2.—*Quandoque . . . intellectus . . . determinatur . . . per voluntatem, quae eligit assentire uni parti determinate et praecise propter aliquid quod est sufficiens ad movendum voluntatem, non autem ad movendum intellectum, utpote quod videtur bonum vel conveniens huic parti assentire: et ista est dispositio credentis.* Ver. 14, 1.—*Alio modo intellectus assentit alicui, non quia sufficienter moveatur ab obiecto proprio, sed per quandam electionem*

voluntarie declinans in unam partem magis quam in aliam; et si quidem hoc sit . . . cum certitudine . . . erit fides. II, II, 1, 4.—*Bonum, quod movet affectum, se habet in actu fidei sicut primum movens.* Ver. 14. 2 ad 13.—*Intellectus credentis assentit rei creditae non quia ipsam videat . . . sed propter imperium voluntatis moventis intellectum.* II, II, 5, 2.—*Credere . . . non habet assensum nisi ex imperio voluntatis.* Ver. 14, 3.

[8] *In cognitione . . . fidei principalitatem habet voluntas.* C. G. 3, 40.

[9] *Intellectus credentis determinatur ad unum non per rationem, sed per voluntatem.* II, II, 2, 1 ad 3.

[10] Cf. William James, *The Will to Believe* (New York, 1927), pp. 59 and 91.

[11] *Per fidem apprehendit intellectus quae sperat et amat.* I, II, 62, 4.

[12] Hoffmeister, *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*, p. 670.

[13] *Amor est principium omnium voluntariarum affectionum.* Car. 2; cf. I, 20, 1.

[14] M. J. Scheeben, *Handbuch der Dogmatik*, ed. M. Grabmann (2nd ed.; Freiburg, 1948), vol. I, p. 291, no. 633.

[15] At this point a quotation from Thomas Aquinas begins: . . . *ut stet illis quae alius scit et sunt sibi ignota, sicut his quae ipse cognoscit.* In Trin. 3, 1.

[16] J. H. Newman, "Love the Safeguard of Faith against Superstition," in *Oxford University Sermons* (London, 1880), p. 236.

[17] . . . *fides, quae hominem divinae cognitioni conjungit per assensum.* . . . Ver. 14, 8.

IV

[1] *Utroque . . . modo tollitur fides: tam scil. per hoc quod aliquid est totaliter manifestum quam etiam per hoc quod a nullo cognoscitur, a quo possit testimonium audiri.* III, 36, 2 ad 1.

[2] *Oportet cognitionem eorum, de quibus est fides, ab eo derivari, qui ea ipse videt.* C. G. 3, 154. Cf. I, 12, 13 ad 3.

[3] J. H. Newman, "Faith and Reason" in *Oxford University Sermons* (London, 1880), p. 236.

[4] II, II, 4, 8 ad 2.

[5] *Ceteris paribus visio est certior auditu; sed si ille, a quo auditur, multum excedit visum videntis, sic certior est auditus quam visus.* II, II, 4, 8 ad 2.

[6] *Works and Days*, 293 ff. The passage is quoted by Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1, 2; 1095b) and also by J. H. Newman (*Grammar of Assent*, p. 342). Unfortunately, the vigor and vividness of Newman's version does not correspond with the original wording.

[7] *Deum esse et alia hujusmodi, quae per rationem naturalem nota possunt esse de Deo . . . non sunt articuli fidei, sed praeambula ad articulos.* I, 1, 2 ad 1; cf. 3 d. 23, 2, 5 ad 5.

[8] Ver. 14, 9 ad 8; I, 2, 2 ad 1.

[9] Jean Mouroux, *Ich glaube an Dich. Von der personalen Struktur des Glaubens* (Einsiedel, 1951), p. 36.

V

[1] Walter Brugger, *Philosophisches Wörterbuch* (Freiburg, 1947), p. 132.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Fides habet aliquid perfectionis et aliquid imperfectionis: perfectionis quidem est ipsa firmitas, quae pertinet ad assensum; sed imperfectionis est carentia visionis, ex qua remanet adhuc motus cogitationis in mente credentis.* Ver. 14, 1 ad 5.

[4] *Motus cogitationis in ipso remanet inquietus.* Ver. 14, 1 ad 5.

[5] This formulation is first found in St. Augustine (*De praedestinatione Sanctorum*, cap. 2, 5). Thomas explicitly builds his analysis of the act of belief upon it; cf. II, II, 2, 1.

[6] *In hoc intelligitur tota ratio hujus actus qui est credere.* II, II, 2, 1.—*Com assensione cogitare separat credentem ab omnibus aliis.* 3 d. 23, 2, 2, 1.

[7] *Cogitatio proprie dicitur motus animi deliberantis, nondum perfecti per plenam visionem veritatis.* II, II, 2, 1.—*Cogitatio . . . proprie in inquisitione veritatis consistit, quae in Deo locum non habet.* I, 34, 1 ad 2.

[8] *In fide est assensus et cogitatio quasi ex aequo.* Ver. 14, 1.

[9] Ver. 14, 1.

[10] *In credente potest insurgere motus de contrario hujus quod firmissime tenet.* Ver. 14, 1.—*Credenti accidit aliquis motus dubitationis ex hoc quod intellectus ejus non est terminatus secundum se in sui intelligibilis visione.* 3 d. 23, 2, 2, 3 ad 2.

[11] *Quantum . . . est ex seipso, non est ei (scil. intellectui credentis)*

satisfactum, nec est terminatus ad unum; sed terminatur tantum ex extrinseco. Et inde est quod intellectus credentis dicitur esse captivatus, quia tenetur terminis alienis et non propriis. Ver. 14, 1.

12 *Cognitio . . . fidei non quietat desiderium, sed magis ipsum accendit.* C. G. 3, 40.

13 *Actus . . . credentis non terminatur ad enuntiabile, sed ad rem.* II, II, 1, 2 ad 2.

14 Ver. 14, 2 ad 15.

15 *Lumen fidei facit videre ea quae creduntur.* II, II, 1, 4 ad 3.

16 3 d. 23, 2, 2, 3.

VI

1 *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft,* ed. K. Vorländer (Philosophische Bibliothek [Leipzig, 1950]), p. 182.

2 *Objectum fidei est res divina non visa.* III, 7, 3.—*Est autem objectum fidei aliquid non visum circa divina.* II, II, 1, 6.

3 *Quia . . . quicumque credit, alicujus dicto assentit, principale videtur esse . . . in unaquaque credulitate ille cujus dicto assentitur.* II, II, 11, 1.

4 Cf. on this the remarks in Chap. IX, p. 89.

5 Ambrose, Second Letter to Emperor Valentinian. Migne, PL 16, 1015.

6 Augustine, *Enarr. in psalmos* 77, 8 (Migne, PL 36, 988); *In Johannis evangelium tract.* 29, 6 (Migne, PL 35, 1630); *Sermo de Symbolo,* cap. 1 (Migne, PL 40, 1190). The idea was taken up by Peter Lombard in his *Sentences,* which for centuries was *the* theological textbook of the West (cf. *Liber sententiarum* III, dist. 23, cap. 4).

7 3 d. 23, 2, 2, 2; cf. also II, II, 2, 2.

8 II, II, 2, 2 ad 1.

9 3 d. 23, 2, 2, 2 ad 1; cf. Ver. 14, 7 ad 7.

10 R. Guardini, "Der Glaube in der Reflexion," in *Unterscheidung des Christlichen* (Mainz, 1935), p. 245.

11 This is a remark of Goethe's which, however, has been quoted incompletely. The complete sentence reads: "Where knowledge suffices, we have no need of belief; but where knowledge does not prove its virtue or appears insufficient, we should not dispute the rights of belief." To J. D. Falk on January 25, 1813. (*Werke,*

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Briefe und Gespräche [Zurich: Artemis-Ausgabe, 1949], vol. XXII, p. 680).

[12] C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947). pp. 113–14 [London: Geoffrey Bles, 1947].

[13] R. Guardini, *Welt und Person* (Würzburg, 1940), p. 110.

[14] It is this ontological presence which is meant by the technical term *potentia oboedientialis.*

[15] I, II, 113, 10. In the *sed contra* of this article Thomas quotes the saying of Augustine: "*To be able* to have belief, as *to be able* to have charity, belongs to the nature of man; but having belief, as having charity, belongs to the grace conferred upon the believer." (*De praedestinatione Sanctorum,* cap. 5, 10; Migne, PL 44, 968.)

[16] There exists also an exaggerated conception of the supernaturalness of belief. It is true, of course, that under the influence of belief we become aware of things which our natural reason does not recognize. Nevertheless, the results are a far cry from the situation which would obtain were the eye suddenly enabled not only to perceive sensuously but also to know conceptually; for then the nature of the sense organ would simply be abolished. The nature of intellectual cognition is not in the least abolished when our mind "believes God as a pupil believes his teacher" (II, II, 2, 3). A sense simply cannot "learn" to think conceptually. But what the human reason "learns" by believing the Word of God does not surpass its natural powers; for it belongs to the nature of mentality to have a direct relationship, an ontological openness to the original Source of all things, *immediatum ordinem ad Deum* (II, II, 2, 3).

[17] *Infidelitas . . . est contra naturam.* II, II, 10, 1 ad 1.

[18] Gabriel Marcel, *Être et Avoir* (Paris, 1935), p. 311.

[19] Pascal, *Pensées,* no. 226 (according to the numeration of Léon Brunschvicg).

[20] Cf. Josef Pieper, "Über das Verlangen nach Gewissheit," in *Weistum, Dichtung, Sakrament* (Munich, 1954), pp. 41 ff.

[21] J. H. Newman, "Faith without Sight," in *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (London, 1880), p. 21.

[22] J. H. Newman, *Grammar of Assent* (London, 1892), pp. 425 f.

[23] J. H. Newman, "Faith and Reason," in *Oxford University Sermons* (London, 1880), p. 198.

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VII

[1] *Der philosophische Glaube* (2nd ed.; Munich, 1948), p. 11.
[2] *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Munich, 1949), p. 272.
[3] *Existenzphilosophie* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1938), p. 79.
[4] *Ursprung und Ziel*, p. 268.
[5] *Philosoph. Glaube*, p. 10.
[6] *Existenzphilosophie*, p. 80.
[7] *Philosoph. Glaube*, p. 82.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[11] *Einführung in die Philosophie* (Munich, 1953), p. 83.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 83; similarly in *Philosoph. Glaube*, p. 29.
[13] *Einführung*, p. 92.
[14] *Ursprung und Ziel*, p. 268.
[15] *Philosoph. Glaube*, p. 11.
[16] *Von der Wahrheit* (Munich, 1947), p. 789.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 866.
[18] *Philosoph. Glaube*, p. 88. *Philosophie* (Berlin, 1948), p. 259.
[19] *Wahrheit*, p. 965.
[20] *Philosophie*, p. 263.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 265.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 265.
[23] *Ursprung und Ziel*, p. 268.
[24] *Philosoph. Glaube*, p. 69.
[25] II, II, 5, 3.
[26] *Voluntas non inquirendi de fide non est voluntas non credendi.* Merkelbach, *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, vol. I, pp. 571 f.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Mouroux, *Ich glaube an Dich*, p. 82.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 45. Mouroux, referring to the commentary on Thomas by Cajetan and to the great Spanish baroque theologian de Lugo, says that in these works "nothing new is expressed."
[30] II, II, 2, 10 ad 3.
[31] Rat. fid., cap. 2.

Notes

VIII

[1] Karl Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie* III (Einsiedeln, 1956), p. 462.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 461.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 460.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 461.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 462.
[6] *Revelatio fit quodam interiori et intelligibili lumine mentem elevante ad percipiendum ea, ad quae per lumen naturale intellectus pertingere non potest.* C. G. 3, 154. Cf. Ver. 12, 1 ad 3.
[7] *Philebus* 16 c. 5–9.
[8] Martin Luther, *Warnungsschrift an die zu Frankfurt am Main, sich vor Zwinglischer Lehre zu hüten* (1533). Quoted from *Deutsche Thomas-Ausgabe*, vol. XV (Heidelberg, 1950), pp. 440 f.
[9] II, II, 2, 7 ad 3; Ver. 14, 11 ad 5.
[10] George Klünder, "Die Kirche ist die Fülle," in *Bekenntnis zur katholischen Kirche* (Würzburg, 1955), pp. 70 f.
[11] Cf. John M. Oesterreicher, "The Enigma of Simone Weil" in *The Bridge. A Yearbook of Judaeo-Christian Studies*, ed. J. M. Oesterreicher (New York: Pantheon Books, 1955), vol. I, p. 123.
[12] John Moody, *J. H. Newman* (Berlin, 1948), pp. 72 f.

IX

[1] Konrad Weiss in an unpublished posthumous fragment, *Logos des Bildes.*
[2] Ver. 14, 8.
[3] *Duo nobis credenda proponuntur: scil. occultum Divinitatis . . . et mysterium humanitatis Christi.* II, II, 1, 8.—*Fides nostra in duobus principaliter consistit: primo quidem in vera Dei cognitione . . . ; secundo in mysterio incarnationis Christi.* II, II, 174, 6.
[4] Merkelbach, *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, vol. I, p. 519.
[5] Cf. Chap. VI, p. 53.

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THE AUTHOR

Born in 1904, JOSEF PIEPER was schooled in the Greek classics and the writings of Thomas Aquinas. He also studied philosophy, law, and sociology and has been a member of the faculty at the University of Münster since 1946. Dr. Pieper has lectured widely at American universities, and in 1962 traveled to India for a lecture tour. His books have been praised by the American secular as well as Catholic press, and T. S. Eliot has written of him: "His sentences are admirably constructed, his ideas expressed with the maximum clarity. But his mind is submissive to what he believes to be the great, the main tradition of European thought. . . . He restores to their position in philosophy what common sense obstinately tells us ought to be found there: *insight* and *wisdom*."

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